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# NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

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## ART. I. — POOR-LAW ADMINISTRATION IN NEW ENGLAND.

THE scope of this paper will be to show, by the exhibition of such facts as seem pertinent and are accessible, first, whether poverty is increasing in New England or not; and next, if it appears not to be gaining ground, to point out some causes, greater or less, of such a state of things. Among the lesser causes that check the extreme form of poverty known as pauperism, it is hoped to prove that the poor-law administration of New England, and particularly the policy of Massachusetts, which has been of late maligned and misconstrued for political purposes, holds an important place.

At the outset I would observe, in entire accord with Professor Fawcett's remarks on this point, though compelled to dissent from his conclusions in many cases, that the rapid accumulation of wealth in a community by no means protects it from the worst evils of poverty known to modern life. There is a certain truth as well as an epigrammatic point in Goldsmith's well-worn couplet, —

“Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates and men decay,” —

though it was not so true in Goldsmith's day as in that of Professor Fawcett. “How comes it,” asks that able writer on English pauperism, “that the augmented produce of agricul-

ture is so distributed that the condition of those who till the soil has not only not improved, but has in some cases retrograded? How, again, does it happen that the greater is the wealth accumulated in our large towns, the deeper seem to be the depths of poverty into which vast multitudes sink?"\* These are the same complaining questions that Goldsmith asked a century ago, and with less reason than they are now asked in England. There is even some excuse for asking the second one in New England, where, in a few of the cities, the depths of sickening poverty are quite discernible, amid the evidences of great and fast-growing wealth. But that the poor, as well as the rich, are growing richer in New England, however it may be in the mother-country, cannot well be doubted, when we consider the whole population of a State or even of a county. For, while pauperism, which is the final stage of poverty, is perhaps keeping pace with the growth of population in some of the New England cities, it is absolutely stationary, if not receding, in the six States as a whole, and is actually diminishing in Massachusetts, which now has a population nearly as large as all the rest of New England.† At the same time, the valuation of property is increasing much faster than the gain in population, and that share of this increase which falls to the industrious classes, or to those who may be called, in a general way, poor, is a very large one.‡ This is known in various ways, among others by the constant and rapid increase of those deposits in savings banks which come from the laboring poor; by the testimony of town and city assessors, who have reason to know how the facts stand; and by the con-

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\* *Pauperism, its Causes and Remedies.* By Henry Fawcett, M. A., M. P., etc. London and New York: Macmillan & Co. 1871. The passage quoted is on the fourth page.

† The population of all New England in June, 1870, was 3,487,924, and now no doubt exceeds 3,550,000. Massachusetts, which then had 1,457,351, has now more than 1,500,000 people, leaving but about 2,000,000 in the other five States. The density to the square mile in Massachusetts now is nearly 200, while that of Great Britain and Ireland is but little more than 250.

‡ The taxables of Massachusetts, including the deposits in savings banks, the "taxable excess" of corporation property, and the stock of national banks, amounted in 1870 to \$1,647,423,623, while in 1865 this amount was but \$1,132,675,881. The gain in population in these five years was not quite 200,000, or sixteen per cent, while the gain in taxables was hardly less than fifty per cent.

tinual purchases of real estate by the laboring poor, especially those of Irish parentage, which the registry of deeds discloses in most of the rural counties of New England. Indeed, one of the things complained of by those who lament the "decay of farming" in Massachusetts is this great change in the ownership of land, passing, as it so often does, from the family that had held it ever since the township was settled, in the seventeenth or eighteenth century, into the grasp of persons born in Europe, or of their children in the first generation. This is a change sometimes to be regretted on local or sentimental grounds, but one that is producing excellent effects on this new class of landholders. It is giving them a "stake in the country," and transforming them from a mere proletariat, as they exist in New York and other great cities, into a "territorial democracy," to borrow a happy phrase from Mr. Disraeli.

So much for the growth and the distribution of wealth. Looking now at the growth and distribution of pauperism, the negative of wealth, we find a singular state of things, already remarked upon by the present writer in this Review.\* From all the statistics that offer themselves, including the pauperism tables of the census of 1870, now going through the press at Washington, the number of paupers in New England appears to be actually less than in 1860, though the population in the mean time has increased about twelve per cent. The census report of 1860 represents the number of paupers in New England, June 1, 1860, as 18,133; the report for 1870 gives the number on the 1st of June that year as less than 16,000. Neither report is very correct in its figures, but probably the errors were no greater in 1870 than in 1860, and therefore we may regard these statistics as showing a decrease in the number of paupers amounting to about one and a quarter per cent a year since 1860.† In Massachusetts we have the authority of care-

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\* See an article on "Poverty and Public Charity," in the North American Review for April, 1870.

† The census table of 1870 is somewhat more in detail than that of 1860, but the general result for each of the New England States, after adding the State paupers omitted in Massachusetts, stands thus: Number of paupers supported in Maine, June 1, 1860, 4,618; June 1, 1870, 3,631; in New Hampshire (1860), 2,311; (1870), 2,129; Vermont (1860), 1,850; (1870), 1,785; Massachusetts (1860), 6,503; (1870), 5,819; Rhode Island (1860), 613; (1870), 634; Connecticut (1860), 2,238; (1870), 1,705.

fully prepared yearly reports for saying that this decrease has actually been taking place there, and the same general causes that operate there would affect the other New England States about equally. We find that, in Massachusetts, the average number of State and town paupers receiving in-door relief was 5,276 in 1860, 4,983 in 1865, and only 4,457 in 1870; a decrease, in ten years, of fifteen per cent, or one and a half per cent a year. In the class of State paupers, in consequence chiefly of the labors of the Board of State Charities, the decrease was even greater. The average number of this class, including pauper lunatics, was 2,537 in 1860, 2,591 in 1865, 2,150 in 1870, and 2,125 in 1871. The number receiving in-door relief from the State on the 1st of October in each year was as follows: 1860, 2,322; 1861, 3,112; 1862, 2,748; 1863, 2,544; 1864, 2,307; (from the State and towns, 5,814;) 1865, 2,259; (State and towns, 6,110;) 1866, 2,148; (State and towns, 6,029;) 1867, 2,209; (State and towns, 6,116;) 1868, 2,142; (State and towns, 6,131;) 1869, 1,882; (State and towns, 5,727;) 1870, 1,737; (State and towns, 5,574;) 1871, 1,785; (State and towns about 5,700.) Here the comparison is imperfect, for we have not the exact number of those receiving in-door relief at the expense of the towns previous to 1865, and therefore cannot give the total of both classes of the poor, on the 1st of October, 1860 and 1861. It cannot well have been less than 6,400 at that date in 1860, and 7,000 in 1861. Here, too, for special reasons, the numbers vary more from year to year than in the comparisons given above, and the regularity of the decrease of pauperism is not so obvious. But the general deduction to be drawn from the pauper statistics of Massachusetts is this, that though the cost of relieving the poor has much augmented since 1860, their number has diminished from ten to fifteen per cent.

In regard to this increased cost of relieving the public poor, Mr. Goschen, President of the English Poor Law Board in 1870, made some judicious remarks in his report of that year.\* He said: "The same number of paupers cost at the present day very much more than twenty years ago. Several causes have contributed to this result. It cannot be denied that the

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\* Twenty-second Annual Report of the Poor-Law Board, p. x.

more humane views which have prevailed during the last few years, as to the treatment of the sick poor, have added most materially to poor-law expenditure. Workhouses, originally designed mainly as a test for the able bodied, have, especially in the large towns, been of necessity gradually transferred into infirmaries for the sick ; and the higher standard for hospital accommodations has had a material effect upon the expenditure." This explanation of the increase in the English outlay for the poor is true in New England ; besides which we have the additional circumstance that our currency has depreciated greatly in purchasing power within ten years past, so that a dollar goes no further now than seventy-five cents did in 1860. In consequence of all causes, the pauper expenses of New England, in general, have risen to be nominally sixty per cent more than they were in 1859-60. At that time, according to the defective census report, the sum expended in the six States was \$1,249,913 ; in 1869-70, according to the last census report, which is rather more exact, the sum expended was \$2,180,496.\* Nearly half of this money was expended in the single State of Massachusetts, which, from its position and the character of its industry, has attracted within its borders more of the class from which paupers come than the other States have, in proportion to their population. In Massachusetts, also, the appliances for the better treatment of the poor are more in use than in the other States.

Here, then, we have an apparent paradox ; the State in which the number of the public poor has decreased most is also that in which the expenditure for their relief increases fastest, — so far as we can judge by the imperfect returns from the other States. At any rate, this is true of the pauper expenses of the cities and towns of Massachusetts, which, in 1859, were but \$522,313, and in 1869 were reported as \$854,609 ; an appar-

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\* Making allowance for the increased population, here would be an increased expenditure of just about sixty per cent. But we know that the pauper expenses of Massachusetts in 1859-60 exceeded the sum named in the census report by about \$180,000, the true expenditure in that State being some \$760,000. This makes it probable that the actual sum expended in all New England was more than \$1,500,000 in 1859-60. In the census report of 1870 the pauper expenses of Massachusetts are given as \$1,108,574, which is but little less than the true amount ; the actual sum in all New England was perhaps \$2,450,000.

ent increase in ten years of \$331,704, or more than sixty per cent. During the same period the pauper expenses of the State, for its beneficiaries, only increased about \$60,000, or a little more than twenty-five per cent, — an excess that can be fully accounted for by the depreciation in the value of the currency. But whether our seeming paradox is true or not, there can be little doubt that the better classification and more humane treatment of the poor, against which General Butler declaimed so loosely, does really diminish their number, if it is accompanied with a strict supervision of the poor-law administration. The experience of Massachusetts since 1863 proves this; and we find that, while the average amount of money expended on each poor person is greater than formerly, the whole number of the poor is so much reduced, that those supported by the State now cost no more in the aggregate than they did in 1860, after allowance has been made for the change in the value of money. In fact, the State officials whom General Butler accused of extravagance had been demonstrating, for eight years, the most economical as well as the most humane method of dealing with the poor, which had ever been put in practice in New England, inasmuch as it was the method by which the adult poor were best cared for, and their children preserved from growing up to pauperism. The example set by Massachusetts since 1863 has already been followed in Rhode Island, and now New Hampshire is in the way to repeat the same experience. In course of time we may reasonably expect Maine, Vermont, and Connecticut to take a similar course; but before that time, probably, Massachusetts will have come nearer to the present system of poor-law administration in those three States; having passed from (1) Local Relief without State supervision, through a period of (2) Mixed Local and State Relief, to (3) Local Relief supplemented and supervised by the State. These are the three progressive stages of poor-law administration in Massachusetts; the first having been discontinued since 1854, and the second and third now existing side by side, until, in course of time, the third stage shall take the place of both the others. In the opinion of those best qualified to judge, this third method — Local (or Municipal) Relief, supplemented and supervised by the State — is that which

must ultimately be adopted in order to reduce pauperism in New England to a minimum, and keep it there. By means of it, coupled, as it naturally would be, with a good understanding between the poor-law authorities of the several States, such as now exists between the overseers of the poor in different towns of the same State, it will be comparatively easy to prevent the formation, in New England, of such a persistent class of paupers as is now the curse of the mother-country.

In former numbers of this Review the poor-laws of New England have been historically traced, and the origin of the large class of persons in Massachusetts known as "State paupers" has been explained;\* as well as the modifications in their condition recently made under the administration of the Massachusetts Board of Charities. Without repeating these former statements, when repetition can be avoided, it may be permitted to continue the discussion thus begun, and to indicate the present condition of the laws of pauper settlement and the general management of the poor in the six States of New England. In only two of these, as we understand, have the "settlement laws" been materially changed since April, 1868, namely, in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. In the former, the terms of settlement have been made so much easier by the act of June 9, 1868 (removing the restriction of citizenship, imposed by the statute of 1794), by the more liberal provisions of the acts of 1868 and 1870 concerning military settlements, by the grudging admission of single women to a settlement by residence, and by cutting off all settlements prior to 1794, that the class of State paupers has been very considerably diminished in number, and many of the poor who used to be sent to State almshouses are now relieved or supported in the place of their residence. In the gradual operation of the new laws the State pauper class will be still further diminished, until it is probable they will not number more than a fourth part of all the paupers in the State, instead of half, as formerly. In New Hampshire the effect of legislation has been precisely the reverse of this, and more like what Massachusetts did in 1850 - 1854. There is no class of "State paupers" in New

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\* See a paper on "The Poor-Laws of New England" in this Review for April, 1868, and one on "Poverty and Public Charity," in April, 1870.



Hampshire, but the unsettled poor, who in Massachusetts are supported from the State treasury, are there maintained by the several counties, and are termed "county paupers." Till within the last ten years, this class in New Hampshire was small; but two successive acts, one before 1868, cutting off all settlements prior to 1820, and another since 1868, bringing this date down to 1840, have had such a sweeping effect that, in most counties, the settled poor are now much less numerous than the unsettled or county poor. Coincident with this growth of the class of county paupers, large county almshouses have sprung up, and are now maintained in all, or nearly all, the ten counties of the State. From the published reports of these county almshouses it would seem that the class of permanent county paupers is much larger, in proportion to the population, than is the class of permanent State paupers in Massachusetts. In the five New Hampshire counties of Rockingham, Strafford, Hillsborough, Belknap, and Carroll, containing 176,791 inhabitants, in 1870, less than an eighth part of the population of Massachusetts, the average number of county paupers supported at the five almshouses\* was 478, in 1870. If this proportion held good in Massachusetts of the State paupers, their average number ought to be nearly 4,000, whereas it is but little more than half that. It is plain, therefore, that the unsettled or county poor in New Hampshire are more numerous than the settled or town poor; indeed, in some counties they are estimated at three times as many. Probably in the whole State the proportion is about two to one, whereas ten years ago it was perhaps three to one the other way; the town poor being then much the most numerous. One result of this change has been that the town almshouses have been sold, in a great many in-

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\* The county almshouse of Rockingham is in Brentwood, near Epping; that of Strafford at Dover; of Hillsborough at Wilton; of Belknap at Laconia; of Carroll at Ossipee. The average number of paupers at these establishments in 1870 was, in the order given above, 130, 135, 107, 60, and 46; in all, 478. Of these at least a fourth part were insane or idiotic persons. The counties also supported and relieved a great many of their poor in the towns of their residence, probably more in number than those at the almshouses. In the five counties above named the whole number of different persons at the county almshouses, in 1870, was about 800; the number of outside poor was perhaps 1,200, and their average number 220. The cost of both classes was about \$ 80,000.

stances, so that the number of these establishments is hardly more than half what it was in 1868.\*

The change in New Hampshire from the old mode of local support to the present system of district almshouses is, therefore, much greater than the change in Massachusetts when the State almshouses were opened in 1854; for the latter, at the utmost, never contained more than two thirds as many inmates as were left in the town and city almshouses; while in New Hampshire there are, as we have estimated, about twice as many in-door paupers of the counties as of the towns. In other respects the case of the two States is not unlike, with this difference, that the New Hampshire law unsettling the poor loses something of its force with every successive year, so that the relative number of town paupers will increase constantly, while the Massachusetts laws, for at least ten years after 1854, tended to enlarge the relative number of the unsettled or State paupers. The change in New Hampshire has been followed, as in Massachusetts, by a great mortality among the poor transplanted from their places of residence to the large county almshouses; most of them being old or infirm persons, to whom an entire change of surroundings is often as fatal as an epidemic disease.† From this and other causes, a great prejudice against the county almshouses exists in the minds of the New Hampshire poor, which will eventually result in an extension of the system of local relief at their homes, as has been the case in Massachusetts. What is especially lacking in New Hampshire

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\* The present writer estimated the whole number of town and city almshouses in New England, in 1868, at 600. Notwithstanding the decrease in New Hampshire, it is probable that the present number is at least 650; there are also three State almshouses in Massachusetts, a State Workhouse, and a State Primary School; in Rhode Island a State Workhouse and an Asylum for the chronic insane, on the State farm at Cranston; and in New Hampshire nine or ten county almshouses. Reckoning the inmates of these establishments, and also the pauper lunatics in various establishments, the in-door poor of New England average perhaps 14,000.

† Out of 147 persons remaining in the Strafford County almshouse, March 1, 1871, 63 were above fifty years old and 23 above seventy; of 108 at the Hillsborough almshouse, 52 were above fifty and 16 above seventy; of 136 in the Rockingham almshouse, 70 were above fifty and 30 above seventy; of 76 supported in the Belknap almshouse, 40 were above fifty and 22 above seventy. The average age of the New Hampshire county paupers is nearly fifty years, of the Massachusetts State paupers less than thirty years.

is a general State supervision ; at present the several counties do not even report to each other or to the State the numbers, cost, etc. of their poor ; nor do the towns report to the county commissioners nor to the State authorities, save in case of persons for whom aid is sought, either of the county or State. Such reports will eventually be required by law, as in Massachusetts, most likely ; and it would be of great service to the public if a single State official had the general supervision of all the almshouses and establishments where the poor are supported. One of these establishments is the State Asylum for the Insane at Concord, where about one hundred poor persons were last year maintained at the expense of the towns and counties, and some thirty were aided by the State. A great many of these pauper lunatics have been removed from the Asylum within the past few years to the county almshouses, where they are maintained at much less cost, but not always in the most satisfactory manner. Another feature of the county almshouses is the existence in several of them of a workhouse or "house of correction," to which persons of the pauper class are sentenced for minor offences ; and in two counties, at least, Belknap and Carroll, the small county jails are included within the almshouse limits, and managed by the keeper of the poor. This mixture of paupers and criminals in one establishment is objectionable, but, for the present, it seems inevitable. We also find that many of the towns board their own poor at the county almshouses, in preference to maintaining them at home, which is one of the many facts showing that the present mode of supporting the poor is more economical than the former one.\* The whole tendency of the system is to diminish and check pauperism in New Hampshire.

The fact that Rhode Island had adopted a pauper system in some respects similar to that of Massachusetts was briefly men-

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\* The census report for 1870 gives the whole number of paupers in New Hampshire, June 1, 1870, as 2,129, of whom all but fifteen were white, and only 375 were of foreign birth. It is probable that about one thousand of these were in-door paupers, and between eleven and twelve hundred were in receipt of out-door relief. The total cost of the poor for 1869-70, as given, is \$235,126 ; it probably exceeded \$250,000. Assuming the census figures to be correct, the number of the public poor in New Hampshire is somewhat greater than in Massachusetts, in proportion to the population, and their cost a little less.

tioned in these pages in 1870. The Rhode Island "Board of State Charities and Corrections" was established by law in 1869, and empowered to construct upon the State farm at Cranston the necessary buildings for receiving the insane, vicious, and honest poor of the State. The first class were to be maintained in an "Asylum for Incurable Insane"; the vicious were to be sentenced to a State Workhouse, modelled after that at Bridgewater in Massachusetts; and for the honest poor a State Almshouse was to be built. The latter has not yet been built, and this class of the Rhode Island poor are still kept in the town and city almshouses, unless they are insane. The Workhouse was first opened July 1, 1869, and up to January 1, 1871 had received 452 sentenced persons, of whom 169 remained at that date. The Asylum was opened November 7, 1870, and on January 1, 1871, contained 118 insane persons, reckoned incurable, of whom 93 were removed from lunatic hospitals, and 25 from city and town almshouses. A little more than half of these insane (62) were town paupers; the rest (56) were supported by the State. The inmates of the State Workhouse, averaging about 140, seem to be supported wholly by the State. The annual cost to the State of these persons (nearly two hundred in both classes) would seem to be about \$ 25,000 for 1870. The sums expended by the thirty-six cities and towns of Rhode Island for in-door paupers during the same year was \$ 45,656 (the average number supported being 514); and for out-door relief \$ 42,320 (the whole number aided being 3,782); making a total of pauper expenses for the municipalities of \$ 87,956. Adding to this the \$ 25,000 expended by the State, and the cost of pauper lunatics at the Butler Hospital and elsewhere, the whole cost for the year was about \$ 120,000.\* In proportion to the population, therefore, both the number fully supported and the whole cost are considerably less than in Massachusetts, but the number receiving out-door relief is greater, and their cost about the same. The success of the new system in Rhode Island has

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\* The census report gives the cost for 1869-70 as \$ 97,702, which probably represents only the municipal expenditure. The number of paupers supported June 1, 1870, is given as 634; of whom 35 were colored, and 192 were of foreign birth. No account is here taken of those partially supported, of whom more than three fifths were foreign born.

not been very marked as yet ; there have been many changes in the State Board and its subordinates, and the condition of things at the State establishments has been experimental and unsettled. Much has been done, however, by the able Secretary of the Board, Dr. E. M. Snow of Providence, and the agent, Mr. Wightman, to exhibit the character and cost of pauperism in the State, and something has been accomplished toward checking its growth, by the new policy of removals and sentences. State supervision in Rhode Island has been firmly established, and, in time, will show satisfactory results.

In Maine, Vermont, and Connecticut, the old system of local support without State supervision continues, as has been said, but efforts are constantly making in the last-named State to change it. Connecticut has opened, since 1868, a large State Hospital, chiefly for pauper lunatics, at Middletown, and now maintains there, at the cost of the State or the municipalities, two hundred or more of this class, mostly incurable. The town and city almshouses also contain many pauper lunatics and imbeciles, but no report gives the true number of these or of the paupers as a whole.\* The increasing number of State establishments for charitable uses, and the rapid growth of the foreign pauper element in the Connecticut population, will probably soon lead, as they ought, to the erection of a State Board of Charities, such as now exist in nine or ten States of the Union.† In Maine and Vermont no such boards are likely to be established at present, so far as appears, nor is

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\* The census report for 1870 states the pauper expenses of Connecticut in 1869-70 as only \$ 189,918, or less than half the cost of New Hampshire in proportion to the population ; the paupers supported, June 1, 1870, are given as 1,705, of whom 114 are colored, and 468 of foreign birth. No account is here made of the number relieved and partially supported, and probably the cost of this class, and of the lunatic poor at Middletown, is also omitted. We cannot estimate the actual pauper expenses of Connecticut at less than \$ 260,000, and they are more likely to be \$ 300,000. Even then they would be much less, proportionately, than those of Massachusetts.

† The States maintaining such boards, with the date of the acts creating them, are as follows : Massachusetts, April 9, 1863 ; Ohio, April 17, 1867 ; New York, May 23, 1867 ; Illinois, early in 1869 ; North Carolina, April 10, 1869 ; Pennsylvania, April 24, 1869 ; Rhode Island, May 28, 1869 ; Wisconsin, March 23, 1871. It is believed that Michigan and California also organized such boards last year ; if so, they exist in States having a population of more than 16,000,000, or nearly half the whole people.

any material change proposed in the prevailing system of local support for the poor. Each of these States has a lunatic hospital (at Augusta and Brattleborough), where pauper lunatics are maintained at the charge of the State or of the towns and cities. That of Vermont has also contained, till recently, many of the pauper lunatics of Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. In both States and in Connecticut the unsettled poor are relieved in the towns where they are found, except such as are sent to the lunatic hospitals, or "moved on" from town to town by frugal overseers, who often remove them unlawfully to neighboring States. Acts of this kind give rise to much ill-feeling along the State borders, and the through lines of railroads connecting different States: they should be rendered inexcusable by an official understanding among the State authorities, such as now prevails between Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Nothing has been done to effect this, however, since 1868.\*

Returning now to Massachusetts, from which we have such full statistical returns every year, we find, as above stated, that, in spite of the growth of population, pauperism is decreasing. The number of the town and city poor is slightly increased, to be sure, in consequence of the great changes in the law of settlement, but much less than would be supposed. In 327 of the 340 towns and cities of Massachusetts, the whole number of paupers fully supported was some fifty less in 1871 than in 1870, though the average number was slightly greater, and the cost of support and relief a little increased. The number relieved and partially supported is also about the same as in 1870, when, for the whole State, it was 23,874; the reported cost of such relief being less than \$300,000, or a little more than one third of the whole pauper expenditure, as it is in Rhode Island.† The number of the vagrant or casual poor grows

\* The census report gives the paupers supported in Maine, June 1, 1870, as 3,631, of whom 39 were colored, and 443 of foreign birth; the annual cost for 1869-70 is returned as \$370,548, which appears to be within \$50,000 of the true cost. In Bangor, then a city of 18,500 inhabitants, the cost in 1869-70 was \$13,825, or seventy-five cents for each inhabitant. At this rate the whole State would have paid \$470,187. In Vermont the reported cost was \$178,628, but it probably exceeded \$200,000. The Vermont paupers, June 1, 1870, are given as 1,785 (more than Connecticut's), of whom 31 were colored, and 523 of foreign birth.

† In the city of New York the cost of out-door relief is but \$120,000, or less than

larger year by year, but measures have been taken recently to diminish them, by arrest and sentence of such as are professional tramps and vagabonds.\* The whole reported cost of supporting and relieving the poor in the towns and cities of Massachusetts was last year larger than ever before, and rose, probably, to \$ 880,000 ; a portion of this, however, is reimbursed by the State, or between one municipality and another, so that the actual cost will not exceed \$ 830,000 in all probability. In 1870 the reported cost was \$ 854,609, and the actual cost a little more than \$ 800,000. The increase has been mainly, perhaps wholly, in the cities and large towns, where pauperism is hardest to deal with. In Suffolk County, for example, with a present population of perhaps 285,000, the pauper expenses, which were but \$ 129,443 in 1870, and in the two preceding years less than \$ 131,000, in 1871 went up to \$ 144,303, — an increase in one year of nearly \$ 15,000, or more than eleven per cent. In the city of Boston alone the increase was \$ 15,078, the rest of Suffolk County having expended less than in 1870. In Boston also the whole number of persons fully supported rose from 960 in 1870 to 1,009 in 1871, and the average number from 434 to 523, showing a more permanent class of paupers ; the number relieved rose from 5,246 in 1870 to 6,104 in 1871. Very much of this increase is due to the operation of the new settlement laws, which transfer persons from the State-pauper class to the list of municipal poor ; something is owing, no doubt, to the gain in population, and something to other causes. The number of the State poor has,

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one eighth of the whole pauper expenditure of the city authorities ; in Philadelphia it was in 1869 - 70 only \$ 86,003, or scarcely more than one eighth of the whole cost of the poor (\$ 488,346). The whole number of persons receiving this out-door relief in New York is not stated, but is probably about 30,000 ; in Philadelphia, though given by Professor Fawcett as 110,000 (!) it did not probably exceed 20,000.

\* Although the number of these vagrants looks formidable when made up to include all who have had lodgings during the year at the three hundred almshouses and police-stations which receive them, it should be remembered that those lodged at any one time are comparatively few, — never more than 500 in a single night for the whole State, and averaging less than 300, or not a twentieth part of all the paupers relieved and supported. Even in England, with its 22,000,000 people, and its six or seven hundred workhouses, the average number of these vagrants lodged at the public cost does not exceed 7,000. (See Twenty-Second Report of the Poor-Law Board, p. xxxii.)

of course, diminished since 1870, and the cost of their support is also somewhat less, especially in the lunatic hospitals, where the new laws of settlement have greatly changed the proportion between the two classes of pauper lunatics. Two years ago, the three State hospitals contained about an equal number of State and of town patients, — 430 of each class, — the private patients being a little more than one fourth of the whole number. On the 1st of October last the State patients had fallen to 348, or but little more than a fourth of the whole number (1,238); while the town patients had gone up to 528, and the private patients from 301 in 1869 to 362.\* The average number of State poor of all classes, including the convicts at Bridgewater, the school-children at Monson, and the sick poor supported by the State in the towns, was a little less in 1871 than in 1870, — about 2,120; but the number supported October 1, 1871, was about 1,925 against a few less than 1,900 a year before. This slight increase was not in those strictly classed as paupers, but among the convicts and the school-children, especially the latter, in consequence of the vigorous operation of the new Visiting Agency Act, which reduces the number of children in the prisons and reformatories, but swells that in the State Primary School. The boys and girls in the three State reformatories, who numbered 620 in October, 1870, and 704 in October, 1869, were but 547, October 1, 1871, — a decrease of more than one fifth in two years, attended with a corresponding reduction in the cost of their maintenance.

These figures will have little meaning or interest for the casual reader, but they have been introduced to serve as evidence and justification for the conclusions about to be drawn, and the statements with which this essay will close. It may be said, without the least fear of contradiction, in view of the facts presented, and in spite of the seemingly adverse opinions main-

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\* Out of 1,965 insane persons in the seven hospitals and asylums of Massachusetts, October 1, 1870, 663 were supported by the State, 728 by the cities and towns, and 574 by their own property or that of their friends. About one hundred of the last class were from other States, so that about three fourths of the patients belonging to Massachusetts were paupers. On the 1st of last October the State patients were about 644, the town patients 810, and the private patients 575.



tained by the Massachusetts Labor Bureau, that pauperism in New England, as a whole, and in Massachusetts particularly, has ceased to keep pace with the growth of the population, and is in fact declining; that the condition of the class immediately above the paupers, and from which they are chiefly drawn, was rarely, if ever, better in New England than now, so that fewer and fewer of this class every year fail of self-support, although the proportion of women among them constantly increases; that one cause of the check given to pauperism in Massachusetts has been the improved poor-law administration for the past eight or ten years, for which the Board of State Charities is mainly responsible; and that the good results of that administration may now be proved by figures and by the testimony of all well-informed persons. The general policy of Drs. Howe, Allen, and Wheelwright, and their associates on this board, was briefly described in these pages in 1870 as "one of thorough classification and of diffusion among the people, as far as possible, of the exceptional classes with which public charity is compelled to deal"; and the outlines of the work done in developing this policy were hastily sketched. Mention was made of the creation of a State Workhouse, a State Primary School for poor children, a Visiting Agency for these children, and an agency to care for the out-door relief of a portion of the State paupers. In the two years since elapsed the work has been steadily carried forward, especially by the three establishments last named, while the Bridgewater Workhouse, though by no means perfect in its plan or its management, has, on the whole, served a useful purpose. The acts relating to the Workhouse are twofold; one disposes of the vicious and lazy who are actually committed to the State almshouses; the other intercepts them in the cities and towns, and causes them to be sentenced at once without the interposition of such commitment, which can readily be effected by the co-operation of the local authorities. If the whole number of the vicious adult poor committed to the almshouses for the past five years exceeds twelve hundred, more than eleven hundred have been actually sentenced to the State Workhouse. For the vicious children and those exposed to vice, three State reformatories were provided as long ago as 1860, — two on land and one at sea.

The State Primary School at Monson is not strictly a reformatory, for it does not receive children because they are vicious, but because they are poor and friendless. Although coming from the pauper class, its pupils are not State paupers in the eyes of the law, but wards and pupils whom the State has undertaken to teach and provide for. It is established in the buildings erected for a State almshouse, and naturally, in the minds of many persons, is still regarded as an almshouse school; but such was not its character when first opened in 1866, and every succeeding year has raised it higher in grade and made more evident to the public the function which it performs, and the necessity for its existence. The Visiting Agency was first created by the Board of Charities as an auxiliary to this school, but when established by statute in 1869 it became much more extensive in its operations, and may now be regarded as a peripatetic reformatory, intermediate between the three previous ones and the Monson School. It has constantly under its charge more wards of the State than are found in all the public reformatories in Massachusetts, the number being in the neighborhood of 2,000, and fast increasing. It received and disposed of more than 500 children during the year ending October 1, 1870, of whom less than half were sentenced to the three State reformatories, while nearly one half were provided for without sending the children to any public establishment whatever. It probably relieves the public institutions of at least 200 children every year who would otherwise be committed, and it shortens the period of detention for all those who are committed. It deals, in course of a single year, with more unfortunate and vicious children than have ever come under public supervision in Massachusetts before, and disposes of them with greater wisdom and humanity than had ever been officially directed to this class of the poor.\* The officers of the

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\* Mr. Gardner Tufts, the present Visiting Agent, said in his Report for 1870: "There were on the 1st of October, 1870, 952 children in the institutions named. There were admitted during the year 663; 245 of these were dependent children, 250 new commitments, 130 returned from places and escape; 38 received by transfer and from Visiting Agent. There went out by the several ways of discharge, probation, indenture, etc., 670 children. The average number of minors under sixteen years arraigned before the courts for offences of which the Agency has cognizance—violation of town by-laws or city ordinances, and crimes punishable by imprison-

Agency are to attend the trials of all children under sixteen, and see that their interests are protected and themselves properly disposed of. At each trial the Agent or his assistant appears, listens to the testimony, and sifts the evidence by examination of the witnesses; then gives the judge the information gained elsewhere by the investigation, and urges such considerations as are proper in favor of the accused. His policy is not to secure in all cases an acquittal of the child, but to bring about his reformation or preserve him from a vicious life. If the offence proved is a trivial one, he is not sent to a reformatory, but placed on a farm or in a workshop; if he is too young or too ignorant to have comprehended the nature of his offence, he is sent to the Primary School, where he is reckoned neither a pauper nor a criminal, and has a chance for education without contact with convicted offenders. If the offence appears exceptional, and if the child's appearance and surroundings are such as to give promise of future correct behavior, and if it be the first offence, he is put on probation, and becomes one of the wards of the State by adoption. In other cases he is formally and legally committed to the Agent and comes under his control independent of the parents, except as the Agent permits; but is allowed to return to the parents and remain with them so long as he does well. Those intended for the Primary School and those placed in the custody of the Agent for indenture, are also legally committed to the Board of Charities, and the control of parents is suspended.

The practical working of this instrumentality for preventing crime and pauperism by looking after the neglected children and giving them a chance in the world, is most satisfactory. No reformatory does so much for its pupils as this Agency does, and it more than justifies the forecasting wit of Judge Hoar, who, when asked (in the days of John Augustus, the Boston philanthropist, who bailed boys brought before the courts for petty crimes) to support in the General Court a scheme to enlarge the great reform school at Westborough, objected, but said he would favor an appropriation "to put a couple of wings

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ment for life are excepted — is five and two thirds daily, or 1,773 annually. These statements show the number of children with whom the Visiting Agency has to do, and in a general way the conditions and circumstances which connect it with them."

to John Augustus." The new Visiting Agency furnishes the wings, and sets three or four Augustuses flying over the State, doing their work even better than the original John.

Quite as important in another way, as leading back toward the former system of local support for the poor, with careful State supervision, are the results of the Agency to visit the sick State poor, and to audit the bills for their support at or near their own homes. Formerly there was no out-door relief granted to the State paupers, except at the expense of the towns and cities, and the money thus expended was only reimbursed by the State in a very few special cases. The rule was to carry the State poor, when ill, to a State almshouse, though it might be a hundred miles off, and the poor creatures might die on the journey. Since 1865 this has been changed, and the experience gained under the law of 1865, as set forth in the reports of Dr. Wheelwright, proves that the sick are now cared for no less tenderly, more economically, and with less risk of pauperizing their families, outside of the State almshouses than inside. It appears that nearly 1,600 sick and infirm persons are aided or supported at an expense, during the year, of about \$ 25,000, including the whole cost of supervision. From one fifth to one half this number of sick persons were formerly supported during the year at Rainsford Island, at a yearly cost exceeding \$ 25,000 ; while the mere supervision of this number of inmates in the State almshouse at Tewksbury during the past year has cost more than half the sum named. It is further to be considered that there were dependent upon these 1,600 invalids, or closely connected with them, as many more persons, children and others, who must have gone to a State almshouse, or otherwise been thrown upon the public for support, if the invalids themselves had been sent thither. And once in an almshouse, it often happens that such persons, especially children, remain there much longer than their own good or that of the public requires. It is easier to get into an almshouse sometimes than to get out, and the period of dependence, in many cases, is unnecessarily lengthened by commitment to an almshouse. An observation of this fact, and of the " pauperization " that results from such commitments, long ago led the Board of Charities to favor a change in the practice, and now they are

disposed to go still further, and extend out-door relief to persons not invalids.\* This is clean contrary to the maxim of Josiah Quincy, fifty years ago, and to the hypotheses of Professor Fawcett and a good many modern theorists, but it seems to be approved by experience, and is likely to become the practice of Massachusetts, particularly if the almshouse departments at Bridgewater and Monson shall be closed this year, as they ought to be. The changes gradually wrought, by which a school and a workhouse have practically been substituted for two of the State almshouses, have been generally accepted as a great improvement; but these changes now need to be completed by devoting the establishments at Monson and Bridgewater entirely to what is now their main purpose. When this shall have been done, there will be but one State almshouse in Massachusetts, — that in Tewksbury, — and the State poor of the western and southern counties, to whom Tewksbury is virtually inaccessible, will most naturally be provided for in their own locality, as the sick now are.

Respecting the treatment of insanity, and the questions thence arising, the Massachusetts policy now is to classify the insane more carefully than has usually been done, to place the chronic and virtually incurable by themselves, in some degree, and to favor the experiment of boarding out the harmless patients in private families, as is done at Gheel and in Scotland. Dr. Howe, for seven years the chairman of the Board of Charities, and lately re-elected for the present year, warmly advocates this experiment, but he can hardly be said to have converted his associates as yet to his faith, though several of them would like to see it tried. The majority are agreed with him, however, in opposing the building of any more great hospitals on the old plan, and would recommend the citizens of Boston to content themselves with a modest building, frugally

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\* In his last annual address, in 1868, Governor Bullock took this view, and said: "I earnestly recommend a thorough investigation of the expediency of encouraging the towns to assist at home worthy and industrious families which have no settlement, with a partial or full reimbursement from the State, in the same manner and under the same supervision as that now adopted for the relief of the sick poor therein. It is clear, to my apprehension, that the grant of a little temporary aid, in the way of fuel or supplies, may save the maintenance of the entire household for months in a public institution."

managed, for the two or three hundred lunatics of that city. The general condition of the insane poor has been improved of late years in Massachusetts, as it has in Connecticut and Rhode Island; but the number increases considerably every decade, and there is now urgent need of some extension of the facilities for treating the insane of all classes in New England.\*

Upon the whole, it would seem that the poor-law administration of New England is well conducted, and that its results in Massachusetts are noteworthy and may be found instructive to other States and communities. At a time when European economists are debating whether the condition of their poor, always bad enough, is not steadily growing worse, and when there is doubt and discouragement about this in some parts of America, it is consoling to find a more cheerful doctrine held in Massachusetts. The volume on Pauperism, by Professor Fawcett, the member of Parliament for Brighton, has been cited on a preceding page, and it is worth reading for the information it contains, but hardly for its arguments and suggestions. A paper by a much more obscure writer, Mr. Charles Lamport, read before the British Social Science Association, at Newcastle, in October, 1870, is far wiser in its treatment of the inveterate plague of England, — pauperism, and its compulsory relief. Holding a middle course between those who denounce and satirize the poor-law system of England, without pointing out an available substitute, — such as Fawcett and Dickens, — and those who perfunctorily defend the existing method, Mr. Lamport points out, with much acuteness, the actual bane of the system. He says: —

“The poor-law *theory* is, that all occupiers of houses and lands shall contribute to a general fund, localized for better administration, to make provision against the wants and claims of the destitute. Its *practice* is that no destitute person, however meritorious, can benefit by this organization without having to pass under something very like the old Roman yoke. On the one side of the Caudine forks, a man stands erect, self-

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\* At the suggestion of the Board of Charities, the asylum for the harmless insane at Tewksbury, Mass., in connection with the State almshouse, is to be enlarged this winter. The number of insane and imbecile persons there is now about three hundred.

respecting and respected, and with name unstained ; on the other side he crouches, a changed and degraded being. He has become a social pariah, hopes destroyed, spirit crushed, reputation gone. Society, before it yields what it dare not refuse, so imbitters the morsel by contempt, that neither giver nor receiver is blessed in the act. The terms 'pauper,' 'parish,' 'poor-relief,' all savor of social reproach. The poor are taught that it is virtuous to shrink from everything appertaining to the whole system. A beggar, even, will unblushingly ask for alms 'to keep himself off the parish.' On the other hand, the rich avoid the whole system as something tainted by social leprosy, and equally shrink from all but enforced contact. From father to son, through many a generation, the unconscious legacy of contempt and hard dealing has descended to us. Nothing testifies so clearly to the prevalent feeling of the upper classes as the persistent rigor of all legislation affecting the poor for eight hundred years. From Saxon serfdom down to modern pauperism the old key-note of contempt and isolation vibrates unchanged." \*

A volume could not make clearer the fundamental mistake at the bottom of poor-law administration in England. Whatever success has been achieved in dealing with pauperism there or here has been gained by reversing this practice of suspicion, contempt, and abasement, by classifying the poor according to their real character and needs, and treating the fund for their relief as an insurance fund, to which they or their representatives had contributed their full share. The poor-rate is, properly, an insurance premium ; the poor-law system of any country should be what Mr. Lampport desires to make that of England, a "National Friendly Society." This is what the Massachusetts Board of Charities has always held and taught, and its policy for checking and controlling pauperism is the same as Mr. Lampport's scheme, only more extended and reaching into details which the English writer did not consider. His four points are, — (1) punishment for vagrancy ; (2) utilization of the weak or vicious portion of the lowest poor ; (3) prevention, by voluntary effort, of any pauperizing influence upon the independent poor ; and (4) to afford an opening for voluntary almsgiving, without the evils attending either individual effort

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\* Pauperism, its Diagnosis and Treatment. By Charles Lampport. Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, Newcastle-upon-Tyne Meeting, 1870. pp. 527 - 536.

or institutional organization. All these have been put in practice in Massachusetts; the first and third by the instrumentality of the Board of Charities, and with gratifying success, especially in what has been done for the children of the poor by means of the State Primary School and the Visiting Agency. Moreover, special efforts have been made to induce the kindred of the poor to provide for them, and to have those needing public relief cared for by that community to which they properly belong; and a vigilant supervision has been exercised, so far as the power of the board extended, over the expenditure of money and the methods of relief and of discipline. That the plague of pauperism has never spread widely in America is due mainly to our institutions and the opportunity which is offered to the poor man; that it has been controlled and diminished where a dense population and the varied competitions of industry had given it a foothold must be ascribed, in part at least, to the measures adopted in Massachusetts since 1863, which have been indicated rather than described in this paper.

F. B. SANBORN.

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## ART. II. — AMERICAN CRITICISM; ITS DIFFICULTIES AND PROSPECTS.

MANY persons have found Crabb Robinson's Diary a heavy book to read through; and he has been suspected of owing the reputation which he enjoyed among his contemporaries to some lucky accidents, such as his acquaintance with more distinguished characters, or his being one of the first Englishmen who thought it worth while to make a study of German literature. But we can gather indirectly from his pages that he was a man of rare conversational power and occasionally epigrammatic speech, and he certainly uttered one sentence which deserves a place among the classic *mots* of literary history. It was his observation to a friend suspected of being hypercritical: *If all the world were like you, there would be no work done. But if there were no one in the world like you, there would be no work done well.*